

# What is FirstNet? Public Safety Broadband for Georgia

In 2012, Congress established the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) – an independent Federal government authority within the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). Its mission is to cost-effectively **create the first nationwide high-speed wireless broadband data network dedicated solely to public safety agencies across the country**. This network is the last standing recommendation of the 9/11 Commission, and something that the public safety community has consistently lobbied Congress for. Think of the FirstNet network as a bigger, reliable, secure and resilient wireless data network that utilizes the latest in Broadband LTE (Long Term Evolution) technology.

## What Will Be Possible with FirstNet?

In the near future, FirstNet will only be used to send and receive data. Mission-critical voice will continue to be carried by land mobile radios (LMR). The following functions will be available with FirstNet:

- Send and receive pictures, video, maps, texts and other high speed data
- Priority access for public safety → the general public is not tying up the network
- Resources dispatched from different jurisdictions can coordinate at the same time through one secure and robust network
- Devices and equipment provide public safety-grade reliability and redundancy
- Ability to share public safety applications and databases
- Mobile and satellite data solutions for remote areas or disaster locations where traditional service may be spotty or down completely.

## What is happening with FirstNet in Georgia?

In 2014, Georgia, via the Georgia Emergency Management Agency / Homeland Security (GEMA), has been coordinating with other states, as well as federal and local entities, to determine the feasibility, potential users, coverage needs and functionality requirements for FirstNet to operate effectively in our state. GEMA is organizing outreach sessions with public safety and local governments to gather information as to what they need in a data network such as FirstNet. FirstNet has indicated to all the states that it will build, maintain, and operate the network, design public safety grade user devices, and will attempt to frame user fees that are competitive with commercial rates. The final design of the system has yet to be determined, nor have potential implementation dates been made firm.

FirstNet promises that Public Safety personnel will enjoy the benefits of their own private, high-speed network for daily use as well as use in major disasters. We will keep Georgia updated with additional information as it is made available. Current information on the effort can be found at <http://firstnet.gema.ga.gov> and at the Federal website [www.firstnet.gov](http://www.firstnet.gov).

This project is coordinated by the  
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